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U.S. Veterans' Bureau

WORK OF THE VETERANS' BUREAU

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ADDRESS

OF

COL. C. R. FORBES

Director United States Veterans' Bureau

AT

DISTRICT MANAGERS' CONFERENCE

September 18, 1922

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PRESENTED BY MR. HARRELD

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WORK OF THE VETERANS' BUREAU.

ADDRESS OF COL. C. R. FORBES AT DISTRICT MANAGERS' CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 18, 1922.

GENTLEMEN: I welcome you to the second annual conference of district managers and officers having charge of the medical and rehabilitation work of the United States Veterans' Bureau.

I have observed your work very closely since our last conference. I have been mindful of my promises to you and I have remembered your promises to me. I can not say that in every instance you have fulfilled your part of our agreement and it may be that all I hoped to do has not been possible. I do not, however, attribute to you any neglect of duty, nor charge you with any negligence toward the program, and I do sense your confidence that anything I may not have been able to accomplish did not materialize for a good and sufficient reason. Such failures as have occurred, I believe, are to have been expected in the normal process of development.

Decentralization has taken place since our last conference. You have had at least six months to put into effect those policies which have been promulgated and transmitted to you, in part, at the last conference and in part subsequently by letter or by formal orders, regulations, or bulletins.

It has no doubt occurred to you on numerous occasions and has been brought also to your attention by many who are interested in this big problem that with decentralization the importance of our task in the field has increased proportionately. Many have been the obstacles arising in the practical applications of central office working instructions to field conditions, and numerous have been the criticisms fired at you from all sides for what was apparently a failure to get your organization into effective working shape and produce results immediately. Most of the problems you have approached in a satisfactory way. Some of the criticisms have been met by an enlightening explanation, and some still remain to be answered. These conditions, however, are a part of the job, and while they necessarily entail concern and worry, your director assures you of his willingness that you share this official grief in proportion to your increased responsibilities. Your reward will be that comfort which comes from a job well done, your budget precludes the sordid one you may have in mind. When I reflect on the worries that attend the administration of this work I often recall the inspiration that came to me when I read the following little squib by a homely corn-fed philosopher whose name has gone but whose words remain:

> Any work of importance carries with it a certain amount of worry. The man who has lived his life with a single purpose of avoiding all worry has lived a shirker's existence; it is because we are men and are doing worth-while things that we feel concern, and the man who has nothing to worry about is of little importance in this scheme of things and usually realizes it.

And so one measure of relief which you can afford yourself will be to follow strictly the principles laid down by the central office and to see to it that you do not modify the program, alter a procedure, or deviate from instructions without appropriate authority from the director.

A rigid adherence to this policy will at least obviate certain additional worries sure to come if central office instructions are not observed—and there will be no reward for this worry.

You must keep before you at all times the fact that the director will be held responsible by the President for the successful operation of the manifold functions of the bureau and for the proper administration of all institutions having to do with the care, treatment, or training of the disabled ex-service men.

It is your duty to inform the director wherein your opinion may differ with the principles of any rules or regulations promulgated. I believe you appreciate that your director seeks such suggestions and criticisms and also that he is grateful for the advancement of any ideas which give promise of being potential incentives to sounder principles or better methods. The bureau has been markedly helped by suggestions offered from the field and developed into rules of action for general observation through the organization.

There are some things about which I know no more than I do concerning the Jewish alphabet, but I am conscious of a firm conviction of one thing, that the degree to which the Veterans' Bureau can operate profitably and successfully will be in direct proportion to the extent that a harmonious and helpful exchange of ideas is developed and maintained among those employees having charge of the various activities. There can not be one set of rules for one district and another set for another district. Uniformity of action in all coordinate field agencies is vital to the ultimate success of this organization. This principle is axiomatic.

Sound organization and economical systems of operation are elemental principles observed by all successful industries. In the large businesses of the country the home office sends to the field agencies, through strikingly uniform means, rules, and regulations for the guidance of field activities. Such instructions invariably emanate from the home office only after careful study and mature consideration, and field agencies are held strictly accountable for a rigid adherence to such instructions. Were this not true, the field offices would soon develop individual practices which could never be tolerated in an organization whose scope of activity is nation-wide. It would naturally follow that any leniency shown by one field office would become known in another section of the country and the patrons of the organization not receiving the favored consideration would become dissatisfied at the discrimination. And so it is with our work—absolutely uniform treatment of beneficiaries of this bureau must be practiced from Maine to California and from Florida to Washington.

And I do not propose that my active and intense interest in this work shall cease until the entire organization has become a successful and smoothly operated machine, and this great institution of the Government is so functioning that irregularities and mistakes shall have reached the proverbial irreducible minimum.

Now for a word about the great rank and file who are handling the infinitude of detail involved in creating and maintaining the millions of records of the United States Veterans' Bureau. I try to think of all of us as constituting a big family which has the interest of the ex-service man at heart and the interest of each other member of the family before him at all times. We can not be successful if we disregard the interest of those with whom we are in daily association. We can not be calloused to the needs of those for whose service the family was created. We can not be an organization of big business if the principles which actuate our motives are not founded on sincerity, truth, energy, and personal forcefulness, or if we are either openly or covertly disloyal, or if we have disloyalty within our ranks, or if we harbor hatred or malice. I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that our district and subdistrict offices are not entirely free from evidences of these weaknesses.

It is right that every man should seek advancement and it is, indeed, a credit to a man if his ambition and desires lead him to look beyond his present responsibility. But let me warn you against attempting the gratification of such ambition or desires if their accomplishment must be at the expense of a deserving fellow workman. It is, indeed, uncharitable and unmanly to further one's own personal ends by taking or permitting others to take unfair advantages.

Within this bureau there are many opportunities for the recognition of loyal and competent service, and district managers and chiefs of sections should see to it that promotions are made for efficiency and that increases are recommended purely on the basis of loyalty, devotion to duty, and productive accomplishment. If you will study the problem from a business point of view entirely, you will never treat superficially the earnest eagerness of the employees within whom the great evolutionary force may be working, and you will in so far as it is humanly possible take into account the loyal interest as evidenced.

Have no hesitancy in seeking advice and suggestions of your coworkers. Do not become imbued with the fancy that your personal qualities, your personal thoughts, or your personal convictions alone are an adequate basis for the determination of a solution to an important problem. Remember that sound judgment and genius too, if you please, are not confined entirely to those who have the advantage of position and, further, that some of the most remarkable advancements the world has seen have come from the ranks of the industries of the North, of the South, of the East, and of the West. It matters not whether a man or a woman comes from the lowlands or from the highlands, whether from rich or poor antecedents, from the halls of the great universities, from the stuffed classroom of the night school, or from the little red schoolhouse on the hill, each may have potentialities of inestimable value, and each individual should be given his opportunity.

In reporting to this office, district managers must not charge an error to a subordinate; they alone are responsible to me for the proper management and strict discipline of their offices and of the fulfillment to disabled men of the Government's obligation, as prescribed by legislation, as I in turn am to the President.

I feel strongly on these matters which I have just mentioned, for I have seen in several of the districts instances of merit unrecognized

and of the retention in positions of trust of men of questionable ability, both, I am sorry to say, to the detriment of the work. It is a paramount duty that we owe to our fellow creatures, and more especially to those with whom we labor side by side, to recognize loyal and effective industry, and it is almost of equal importance that we weed out the incompetents and the otherwise unfit. Political and selfish purposes are not to be served at the expense of deserving employees of this bureau.

For some time I have been turning over in my mind two questions of probable value in promoting the operation of the district offices. I desire that you consider each one carefully and offer your thought as to their practicability, and in the event of your concurrence with the general suggestions, that you outline in each instance both the scope and the limits which should be applied.

First, it has been suggested that while such conferences as the one in which we are now engaged are productive of excellent results, and while the exhaustive inquiry of the traveling committee likewise has much to do with bettering methods, yet neither of these gives the district manager that personal, intimate conception of what is being done in other districts that I think might prove to be another factor of intensive instruction that would be helpful to those in charge of field work.

I am, therefore, considering the proposition of arranging some type of rotating supervision between district managers, or of periodical visits by district managers to other offices, by which they will have an opportunity to exhaustively study the actual working detail and methods of other field offices and to indulge in an exchange of ideas with each other in the field. I have withheld presenting this to you before for the reason that previously I have not felt that the district offices were provided to a sufficiently desirable extent with chiefs of administration qualified in all respects to carry the load of responsibility during such absences of the district managers, but I believe now that this objection has been removed and that the question is at least feasible of consideration.

The other matter is the question of amplifying the responsibility placed upon the chief of administration by the present organization field chart. In cases which have been brought to my attention I find that chiefs of divisions often resent observations made by others of but coordinate responsibility, and with some propriety question the authority of the chief of administration to exercise any interest in their particular field. I would like the candid thought of the district managers as to the desirability of fixing on the chief of administration in addition to his prescribed duties those of executive officer. It is important that this weakness be overcome at once and thus remove a source of all too common discord. In many districts I know that your concurrence in this suggestion will but put the stamp of general approval on what has been already informally delegated by a number of district managers.

CLAIMS.

Since our last conference I have visited almost all the district offices, many of the subdistrict offices, most of the hospitals, and a large number of the schools and training centers. I find that there is an extremely zealous disposition on the part of those in authority to

render the service expected of them and to honestly administer the ex-service men the best treatment that can be afforded within the limitations imposed by law.

I am delighted to commend you on this. I have told you from time to time that the ex-service men must have the benefit of the doubt, that you can not always settle a case by pure "affidavitism." Wherever it is found that a claimant is physically unable to appear before an examining board the bureau must go to him. Put yourself in the man's place, were you unable to travel any distance to a district or subdistrict office. If you were incapacitated to the extent that to travel would aggravate your disability, and this aggravation did occur, would you consider yourself responsible for the aggravated condition, or would you feel, quite properly, that the burden of proof was against the Government? And would you not charge the Government with neglect and responsibility in the event of an aggravation or death. Keep in mind that many thousands of men have been ordered for examination. And consider also the Government's responsibility in cases that may not have resulted from military service, but on which we have ordered men up for examination. With these things in mind, exercise the most careful judgment in ordering men up for examination as opposed to sending the examining officer to the man.

I am opposed to the correspondence method of adjudicating claims. "Insufficient evidence" and "no service connection" mean little to thousands of men. "Additional affidavits" is just about as nebulous to thousands of others. Many most worthy cases have been neglected and delayed, or have died a premature death because of the long torturous channel of correspondence resulting from stereotyped phrases not understood by the average claimant. This is particularly unfortunate where beneficiaries are involved whose education handicaps them in understanding carelessly written letters, and in preparing such written evidence as is called for.

There is such a thing as becoming "hard-boiled." There is such a thing as being influenced unduly by a previous rating, but it is essential to fair treatment that each and every case be regarded in a fresh light, no matter how often reviewed. A peculiarly trying and exacting duty develops upon your board of appeals and your board of review and the members of these bodies must constantly be inspired to the most earnest and sympathetic consideration of cases brought to their attention.

INSURANCE.

There is another phase of the bureau's duties to ex-service and service men and women that I must bring to your attention; that is, the duty of the Veterans' Bureau to see that every ex-service man and woman is fully advised as to his or her insurance rights and privileges under the war risk insurance act as amended, so that the real good intended by the passage of the war risk insurance act and amendments can be accomplished.

I purposely do not mention those now in the service for the reason that the rights and privileges of the act are being ably explained by the War Department, Navy Department, and Marine Corps, but when we realize that upward of 4,500,000 individuals applied for yearly

renewable term insurance, and that there are approximately only 600,000 now continuing their insurance, it seems reasonably certain that after making allowance for claims awarded, that a large proportion of the remaining 3,500,000 who have allowed their insurance to lapse either do not know their rights and privileges, or, if they do, they are not aware of its real advantages. Therefore, gentlemen, in order to pay the debt the Veterans' Bureau owes to the ex-service men and women, it is important that we take steps to advise these individuals, to the fullest extent permissible under the law, of their rights and privileges and to explain the advantages to be obtained by reinstating and continuing their insurance.

This is one of the bureau's problems. Therefore, it is my problem and equally your problem, and the bureau is open to suggestion as to better methods for distributing literature and the complete dissemination of information so that the most isolated case will receive proper attention.

FINANCE.

You will all be interested to know that action has been taken to accomplish prompter payments of bills submitted by the field offices to Washington, and steps are being taken looking toward the ultimate decentralization of compensation disability award payments. Decentralization of payment of training allowance pay has been authorized, but some delay will be experienced due to the fact that the manufacture of special equipment can not be made before September 15. It is probable, however, that the training allowance payments after October will be made through the district offices. With these facilities at your command, it is expected that further complaints about delayed payments will be practically eliminated.

LEGAL.

Though legal advisers have been designated in the various districts, the officers of the various districts should appreciate the fact that the general counsel is legal adviser for the whole bureau and not merely for the central office. Consequently, legal problems on which there is any doubt in the minds of administrative officers of the various districts may be and should be submitted to the general counsel for opinion.

The general counsel and his associates give careful consideration to problems submitted to them and their decisions are rendered in the belief that they are correct. Nevertheless, both the general counsel and his associates are men of open minds, and if it is honestly believed by the district managers that the opinions expressed by the general counsel are in any respect erroneous the general counsel is perfectly willing to give the matter reconsideration. Requests for reconsideration should not be made in a controversial spirit, but wholly for the purpose of getting at the correct solution of the problem.

PERSONNEL.

For the benefit of members of this conference who were not present on the previous occasion or who, due to some oversight, may not have had the fact emphasized to them, I want to reiterate forcibly that in the selection of personnel and their treatment during the period of

employment chiefs of divisions must always bear in mind that ex-service men and women invariably have the preference, other conditions being equal. Bear in mind, however, that this general rule should never operate to retain in the employ of the bureau an ex-service person who has manifested an incompetency that can not be overcome or has otherwise evidenced his unfitness. It is, however, intended to favor those men and women who, by their military service, have earned the right to this consideration. Political pressure is a matter which should not be permitted to affect the handling of personnel questions. Oftentimes Senators and Members of Congress plead the cause of undeserving employees without a real knowledge of all the circumstances, but when informed as to the true facts promptly withdraw their recommendations. You will also find that in many instances when you explain to the Members of Congress that the salary appropriations, as reflected to you in the Budget, do not admit the taking of the action which they request their insistence will change to commendation.

MEDICAL.

One might estimate the task of the Veterans' Bureau as service to an ex-soldier who could qualify at one time or another for all the benefits provided by law, multiplied by the number of applicants.

All benefits being based on physical disability means, as I have so often emphasized, that almost every act of the bureau is based on a medical opinion: our mistakes and our successes depend primarily on the quality of our medical service and 95 per cent of the work of the bureau and its huge expenditures are undertaken on the advice of our doctors.

There are about 11,700 medical and dental men engaged in our work, 2,200 of them giving full time, 900 in hospitals, and 10,700 in district work, of which 8,260 are dental and designated examiners and attending specialists on fee basis. Each man has devoted from 6 to 30 years to his profession and 97 per cent of them saw service in the World War. These men understand, and are understood by, the disabled ex-service men far better than any other class of men who come in contact with them.

The mistakes of the past were largely due to failure to appreciate the fundamental medical importance of our problems and also to a tendency to overrule or even ignore the doctor's honest opinions by assumption of an authority which the law never contemplated. Some of these acts were errors of the heart and may be forgiven, but enormous abuses in this respect, not only of the letter but of the spirit of the law occurred in the beginning and occur now to some extent, for which there is no excuse and which perhaps cause irreparable harm to the character of thousands of young men by helping to destroy their self-reliance and their natural ambition to succeed through their own efforts.

In facing the future let us resolutely determine not to commit the errors of the past and to go forward in our improved programs guided by the light of our experience and the aid of all concerned in relief for our disabled veterans.

WHAT IS THE REAL BUSINESS OF A VETERANS' HOSPITAL?

It is to produce a certain output in health for each man plus a decision, whenever possible, on his employment objective and his need for training, before he leaves the hospital.

This means a radical change in the organization of our hospitals, including programs for educating specialists for the medical and other personnel, all of which have been approved; standardization of all elements that make up our concept of a hospital, namely, human energy, brains, and harmony of action, toward which the American College of Surgeons has offered, without cost, all the facilities of that great organization. This will make possible the success of my plan for the dehospitalization of certain patients.

As I have already mentioned, I have been deeply impressed with the fact that the great majority of our chronic hospital cases are ambulant, that many of them would be happier and more content at home, and that by strengthening the vocational facilities of the hospitals in order that each man can have his need for training promptly determined and then by as many changes in trade and other tests as necessary have his employment objective settled, all while in the hospital and under careful medical supervision, that his problem can be solved. This will permit of a final decision in each case as to the best place outside of the hospital, perhaps the home, in which to continue treatment and training until rehabilitated, and without loss of compensation. This should be a great saving in time to the man, and money to the Government. It may be found that some hospitals can be actually converted into special training schools.

RATING IN THE FIELD.

Another matter that has come to my attention in connection with rehabilitation is that the subdistrict office is usually also the best place in which to determine in one operation a man's employment objective and need of training. One good sensible and even average doctor in each suboffice, and many already have such, working in harmony with the training section, as they all now do in the field, can secure a far better picture of a man's needs, with the records and the man himself before them, and near his own home town, than the district office can ever hope to do. This suboffice opinion can be made legal simply by approval of the district manager. Another short cut to efficiency in this part of the work might be, after all the legal questions have been cleared, to route such cases direct from the claims section to the suboffices. This statement to the suboffice should also include an opinion as to percentage of compensability, if not a training case; whether hospitalization or out-treatment is needed and whether the assistance of outside agencies is required.

Such procedure should prevent the too frequent conflicts aroused in a man's mind by he being told one thing by one doctor and another thing by another and obviate much of the just criticism of our work in this respect. This, it seems to me, leads us to the real, the actual decentralization in it's truest sense.

DEHOSPITALIZATION.

I have in mind, gentlemen, a matter which I have discussed with the President and to which I have given long hours of study and that is the dehospitalization of men who have proceeded to their homes and are receiving out-patient treatment, and during their period of disability be not reduced in compensation. Between 65 and 70 per cent of our cases are ambulant. About 40 per cent of these ambulant cases could be discharged from hospitals and returned to their homes, provided, however, that the environment of their homes will be conducive to a recovery.

Too much institutionalism, to my mind, is harmful. The man loses courage, his morale is destroyed, and he entertains an unwholesome fear of going out into the world and attempting the great struggle. The man's courage must be strengthened, his mind occupied by helpful inspiration, and he must be stimulated to a determination to recover and return to active work. Hospitalization, when unnecessary, is an insidious and dangerous treatment, often robbing a man of that most valuable of human traits, self-reliance. It will deteriorate ideals and deaden ambition. A man should mingle with normal fellow beings and absorb from them strength and courage and an outlook on life which well and happy men possess. As soon as possible get the disabled out in the sunshine, near to nature or industry, as the individual disability may suggest as being most helpful, but in all events take them away from those surroundings which will inevitably sap real manhood. Industrial history has never been made by men who are content to accept anything approaching the domiciliary treatment to which many of our ex-service men are, I fear, rapidly becoming subjected.

REHABILITATION.

I have been much interested in our rehabilitation work, and I have been following closely the number of men who have gone from our schools to be welded again into the fabric of the industrial personnel of our nation. I have watched their progress, and I have sought the best advice obtainable on an employment program.

You are to-day operating an employment unit within your district, the purpose of which is to provide employment for all rehabilitated ex-service men and women. That this division of our work will be a success goes without comment. The great industrial centers of the country have responded most generously and are absorbing into their activities many men who have been trained under Government supervision.

No one knows better than you gentlemen the high proportion of ex-service men of foreign birth who speak our language feebly and are utterly innocent of any knowledge of English. It is my earnest desire that all ex-service people so handicapped be carefully instructed to correct this fundamental weakness, and I look to see the time fast approaching when men rehabilitated by the United States Government will be not only skillful workmen in their respective trades or persons of real accomplishment in those vocations for which they have prepared, but will be creditable monuments to the instruction in English which is being given.

I conceive it to be an obligation of the Government that while in employment we should maintain an observation of the rehabilitated man's progress, not only to stimulate him in his chosen field or work, but to advise him in all matters which have to do with his health. Their passing from training back into industry must not mean that the Government has discharged its entire responsibility. It must be remembered that a man received training because of a disability and a vocational handicap incurred in the line of his military duty, and until a rehabilitated man has safely embarked upon his new endeavor with surroundings that are apparently conducive to his happiness and welfare, and not until then, has the Government discharged its debt.

CORRESPONDENCE.

One of the features of the work of the bureau which can and must be improved is corespondence. I do not like to cite to you elementary principles of a subject with which your forces should be thoroughly informed, but such numerous and repeated instances of gross failure to treat letters with care and thought are brought to me that I am constrained to discuss somewhat the treatment of mail. I recall one instance of a correspondence clerk who said in his letter to a prominent man, "of course, to a man of your intelligence." I have on numerous occasions been severely criticized by the Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives because of letters from bureau officials utterly ignoring specific questions asked, and replying to a serious communication with a stereotyped phraseology, or even with a form letter. Such gross mistreatment of mail may not have resulted from any vicious intention, but it was certainly an evidence of the grossest indifference or culpable ignorance.

I want you to take back to your people some thoughts that must be observed with a fidelity to both the letter and the spirit of instruction. Every person dictating a letter must always remember first, that there is nothing personal in his work, that he is representing the United States Government, and the tone of his letter should be quiet and factive; never conveying the impression of impatience or contain the slightest possible ground for inference of discourtesy. The receipt of a caustic or quarrelsome letter under no circumstances justifies a reply in like tenor. There is much truth in the old saying that "A man who reads his letter when his feelings have grown cool would like to have a kicker come and kick him, as a rule." Do not give reasons or explanations unless they are requested. To do so gives rise to a purposeless correspondence in addition to reflecting on the intelligence of the addressee. Do not hestitate to say "No" if that is the answer, and having said no, do not attempt to suggest an alternative aimed to circumvent your own no.

It is highly important that correspondence be kept moving. It is almost equally important that all letters and textual matter be prepared in a workmanlike manner. An irregular, ununiform, botched appearance generally indicate an indifferent consideration of the subject being handled and gives rise, with justification, to a question as to the accuracy of statements contained. It is my belief that some thought by this conference might well be spent

on making suggestions that will obviate these weaknesses mentioned and be conducive of improvement in the quality of letters emanating from the various offices of the bureau.

BUDGET REPORTS.

I want to emphasize the importance of keeping within the Budget allotment for the administrative expenses of each district. This can be done only by budgeting the district as a whole, the district office, and every suboffice and school within the district. Allotments must be made quarterly with a current check of expenditures against allotments. After an allotment is received, there should be set aside a surplus which will amount to a reserve to meet emergencies. The district manager who operates under a budget and can not allocate his funds in such a manner that they are elastic enough to cover any reasonable emergency without calling upon the central office for a fresh allotment is not on top of his job and fails to appreciate the advantages of a budget. I want a personal report from each of you as to savings which you will make on your allotment. I will look forward to these reports because I am a firm believer that efficiency and economy go hand in hand.

Of scarcely less importance is the matter of consolidated monthly progress reports. The purpose of a progress report, especially in an organization like the Veterans' Bureau, with offices scattered over the country, is to enable each executive from bottom to top to tell his superior what he accomplished, and if there be arrearages what steps are taken to wipe them out. If the district manager does his full duty in requiring reports from his subdistrict managers and subordinates, he knows exactly the size and distribution of the training, hospital, dispensary, compensation, and insurance load which he must administer within his district. The parts of his program which are showing progress are known as well as who deserves the credit. Also, he knows where the district's program is falling down and where to center his energies. The mild and indifferent manner in which certain executives of this bureau in the past countenanced wrong conditions can be stopped by intelligent use of progress reports and going after every wrong condition as soon as it is brought to light. More results and less excuses are demanded from every district manager, and he in turn must demand no less from each subdistrict manager and executive.

There has been serious complaint about the work involved in submitting reports of progress to the central office. While suggestions as to the improvement of that form of report are always welcome and nonessentials must be cut out, the essential facts must be reported. No effort has ever been made to ask for all the important facts regarding the operation of a district, but good administration demands that the director know and follow the trend, progress, and success of the fundamental duties for which he is made responsible by act of Congress.

The fact that this bureau will disburse more money this year and next year than any other department of the Government, means that it receives more careful scrutiny by the appropriating committees of Congress and on the floor of both Houses, than any other department.

The administration is demanding efficiency and economy in Government. One-fifth of the total outlay of the Government, exclusive of that of the public debt, will be made through this bureau next year. Responsibility therefore for one-fifth of the cost of government, its efficiency or inefficiency in the administration of funds, rests in the hands of you who are attending this conference. I charge you now with knowing and measuring the services rendered from day to day and month to month, and seeing to it that each dollar counts.

As I stated above, I can keep in personal touch with essential facts only. Much information which the district managers must have, vital to the bureau's success, can not reach the director's office. The periodic survey of the district and subdistricts to make sure that there is full use of educational facilities afforded by schools and factories in the community and those which the bureau provides, full utilization of Government hospitals in the district which have empty beds available and maintained at a high overhead cost, contracts with the best private hospitals, prompt and satisfactory employment of rehabilitated trainees, complete cooperation with the civic, social, and veterans' organizations of each community, all interested in the welfare of ex-service men, illustrate my point.

It is safe to say that in a project so large as ours, the success or failure of each district depends upon the ability of its executive to keep before himself the fundamental facts as a basis for decision and action.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion I want this conference to mean much to you all and I want each of you to write me personally, setting forth your impression of the conference and particularly as to the discussions which have been the most interesting to you. I want you to have ever in mind that you are representing your Government in the greatest undertaking of its kind which history has known. Be careful in your deliberations, be strong in your well considered and well founded convictions, be honest with your fellow man and above all do not turn a disabled man or woman from your door until his story has been heard and sympathetically and intelligently treated.

Do not discharge your duties in a perfunctory manner nor cease your day's labor without the inner conviction that you have started some man or men on the road to contentment, success, or happiness, and do not ease up on your endeavors to bring back the great opportunity to those whose wounds and ills resulted from the service given that our Nation might live on forever.

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